

Mr. Speaker, I ask the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in saluting the Class C Michigan Basketball Champions, the Houghton Gremlins, their coaches and loyal fans.

MICHAEL ADMIRE ELECTED
TEXAS YOUTH GOVERNOR

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Michael Admire on being elected Texas Youth Governor by his peers this year as part of the YMCA National Youth in Government program. The national conference of governors is being held this week in Washington, DC.

Mr. Admire is an outstanding student who has proven to be charismatic, ambitious and full of integrity. Part of his official duties as the Texas Youth Governor includes reviewing all proposed legislation with the option to sign or veto specific bills. This task is considerable and brings a great deal of commitment and clear judgment.

The Texas Youth in Government is an outstanding program which allows students to actively participate in the government process. During the program, participating students gain an understanding of local and national government process, an understanding of political systems, as well as obtain an appreciation for the diversity of viewpoints on public issues and a respect for the beliefs of others. Democracy is built upon citizens' active participation in upholding civic responsibilities; the Texas Youth in Government program actively promotes this foundation of democracy.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Michael Admire and his accomplishments as Texas Youth Governor. As a resident of Justin, Texas, in the heart of the 26th Congressional District, I am honored to represent Mr. Admire in Washington. He is an outstanding student and a model to the community.

RECOGNIZING TREVOR TUTT FOR
ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Trevor Tutt, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Trevor has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Trevor has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Trevor Tutt for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HIV/AIDS TODAY CLAIMS A MORE
DIVERSE GROUP OF VICTIMS

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD an article, entitled *The Changing Face of HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, by Tony Best, published in the June 6, 2006 edition of New York Carib News, in the CaribHEALTH section. Mr. Best recalls the first time, twenty five years ago when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control informed the world about a disease that claimed the lives of five homosexual men in California. From then on, this mysterious disease became known as the "gay cancer" and was considered as an immediate sentence for death.

Since then, HIV/AIDS has been responsible for over 25 million deaths worldwide, and the Caribbean Islands have had nothing short of a personal encounter with the disease, as HIV/AIDS claimed 20,000 lives in the region. The most affected countries in the Caribbean have consistently been Haiti, the Bahamas, Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Best quotes U.S. HIV/AIDS expert Dr. Wayne Greaves as stating that "Looking back on what has happened in the 25 years, the picture is still not a bright one." Despite all the innovative treatments that now prolong the lives of HIV/AIDS patients, there is still no cure or even a drug that prevents HIV in the first place.

Another very noteworthy point that Mr. Best emphasizes is that HIV/AIDS, while first distinguished as a homosexual, white, male disease, has now become blind to sexual orientation, gender, and race as it is alarmingly spreading and infecting increasing numbers of Blacks and heterosexual women. Although current census places Blacks as accounting for 12 per cent of the U.S. population, they also account for a whopping 51 per cent of the new HIV cases in the nation. Furthermore, the diagnosed HIV cases for women have tripled since first cases in 1985.

Mr. Best cites possible theories that may explain these surprising shifts in HIV infection such as low rate of uncircumcised Black males compared with whites, the large Black prison population, and poverty. In essence, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has completely transformed in nature with regards to who is primarily infected by the disease. Akin to the shift in the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic exists the fact that the HIV virus is able to mutate so easily, making it virtually impossible for scientists to develop a vaccine against the disease.

Nevertheless, Mr. Best cites Dr. Greaves as commenting that while the cure to HIV is a "far way off," in the meanwhile, scientist can still continue to develop medications that can prolong life. This point is well taken in light of the fact that there is no cure for diabetes and hypertension, and yet, science has been able to treat people with these diseases to the point where the public no longer sees them as terminal conditions. Dr. Greaves underscores education and access to beneficial drugs as key elements in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER THE FIRST
CASES—THE CHANGING FACE OF HIV/AIDS
EPIDEMIC

(Tony Best)

To some, it was the disease from hell, the "gay cancer," that brought death. To others, it was an unfathomable plague whose origins were first believed to be in Haiti. That was a discredited medical theory scarred a nation, forcing millions from the Caribbean country to fight back to clear their name. To yet another group, the lethal virus that terrorized communities in North America, Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America, is still wreaking havoc, especially in Africa, but much less so in North America and the Caribbean.

The disease: HIV/AIDS.

Twenty five years after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control first told the world in a 1981 report about the deaths of five homosexuals in California from a rare form of pneumonia, few countries, if any have been spared the ferocity of this deadly disease. Some 25 million deaths later, at least 20,000 of them in Haiti, the Bahamas, Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, and their neighbors, the world is grappling with the devastation HIV/AIDS has left behind. The Bahamas and Barbados, for instance, are considered success stories in dealing with it, have had more than its fair share of deaths. "Looking back on what has happened in the 25 years, the picture is still not a bright one," said Dr. Wayne Greaves, a Caribbean scientist and an HIV/AIDS expert in the U.S.

For one thing, asserts Dr. Greaves who heads a research laboratory at a large U.S. pharmaceutical firm, "we can argue it is brighter than before, because there are newer and more effective drugs." Even more important, scientists know how to block some, not all, infections that attack the immune functions within the body. Still, there is no drug, which prevents HIV infection in the first place.

"From the epidemiological standpoint it is particularly disconcerting, particularly among Blacks and Hispanics," he said. "In the early days of the epidemic, 95 per cent of the total cases were among men. Two-thirds of those cases were among Caucasians. Blacks made up 20 per cent of the cases. Today, although Blacks account for 12 per cent of the U.S. population they account for 51 per cent of the new HIV cases. For women, the story today isn't very good. The cases diagnosed in the U.S. have increased dramatically among women, tripling among women. From eight per cent in 1985 women accounted for 29 percent of all the cases. It is even higher today."

The hard part is that the pattern of the diseases in Caribbean countries mirrors the trend in the U.S. Globally, more than three million died in 2004 and of the 40 million who succumbed to the disease since 1981, Africa accounted for half of them. In sub-Saharan Africa alone 25.8 million are living with HIV, a 75 per cent jump in the last decade. Sub-Saharan Africa has the world highest rate of infection followed by the Caribbean. In Asia, 8.3 million are living with the disease, an increase of almost 300 per cent since 1981. Indeed, 25 per cent of the new worldwide cases were in Asia last year. In Latin America and the Caribbean an estimated 2.1 million now have the disease, a 75 per cent increase from 1995.

"What is really very troubling in the United States is the high rate of infection among Black men, who are having sex with other men and many are also having sex with women," said Dr. Greaves. "This is really very troubling." How come such growing infections among Black men? "It's not really quite clear what's happening," Greaves said.